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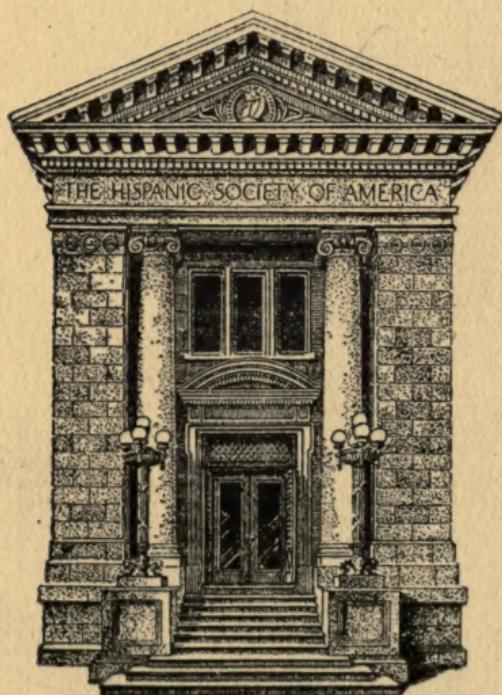
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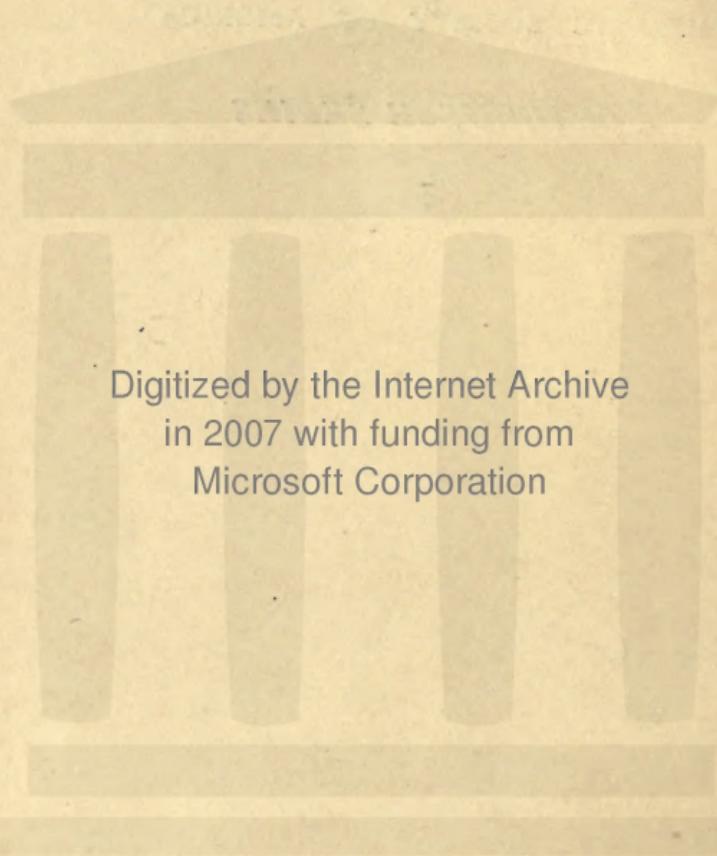
ОГЛАВЛЕНИЕ

# HISPANIC NOTES & MONOGRAPHS

ESSAYS, STUDIES, AND BRIEF  
BIOGRAPHIES ISSUED BY THE  
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*PORtUGUESE SERIES*

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NO TRIM

# GIL VICENTE

BY

AUBREY F. G. BELL



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## PREFACE

WE are perhaps somewhat inclined to believe that we have discovered an author or an artist if we do not find many references to him in past writers. Yet the test may be misleading, since it was more usual in times past to admire in silence. We consider that Domenico Theotocopuli, 'El Greco', belongs to the twentieth century, but it may be doubted whether those who really appreciate him have greatly increased in number, and a passage in a comparatively obscure writer shows that a hundred years ago he could be placed side by side with the greatest painters. Joaquín Lorenzo Villanueva (1757-1837), Canon of Cuenca and member of the

Spanish Academy, in a volume of *Poesías Escogidas*, published at Dublin in 1833, has the following lines (p. 220):

Con los pinceles del Greco,  
De Rafael ó Velazquez.

Gil Vicente in the same way was not wholly forgotten in any century. In the seventeenth century, although the learned might dismiss his works as foolish *semsabórias*, there were at least a few who could 'collect the gold from this rubbish'. Even in the eighteenth century, the most unfavourable to an appreciation of Vicente's genius, the poet Pedro Antonio Corrêa Garção (1724-72) referred to him with zealous admiration. At the beginning of the nineteenth century Friedrich Bouterwek in his history of Portuguese literature devotes more space to Vicente than to any other writer except Bernardim Ribeiro, Sá de Miranda, Antonio Ferreira, and Camões. Yet we cannot get over the fact that when Böhl de Faber in his *Teatro Español anterior a Lope de Vega* (Ham-

burgo, 1832), pp. 38-98: *Ocho Representaciones de Gil Vicente*, published a few selections from Vicente, 'dem trefflichen Vicente' (ib. p. 469), no new edition of his works had appeared for two and a half centuries, and he could only be read in the exceedingly rare first (1562) and second (1586) editions. The following are the modern

EDITIONS: *Obras de Gil Vicente*. Ed. J. V. Barreto and J. G. Monteiro. 3 vols., Hamburgo, 1834; *Obras de Gil Vicente*, 3 vols., Lisboa, 1852 [Bibliotheca Portugueza]; *Obras de Gil Vicente*. Ed. J. Mendes dos Remedios, 3 vols., Coimbra, 1907-14 [Subsidios para o estudo da literatura portuguesa, vols. 11, 15, 17]; *Farça de Inez Pereira*. Lisboa [1896]; *Auto Pastoril Poriuguez*. Lisboa, 1898; *Auto da Alma*. Lisboa, 1902; *Auto da India*. Ed. Luis Callado Nunes, Lisboa, 1905; *Auto da Festa*. Ed. Conde de Sabugosa [with facsimile of the only known copy of the original edition].

Lisboa, 1906; *Autos de Gil Vicente*, Ed. A. Lopes Vieira. Porto, 1916; *Four Plays of Gil Vicente*. Cambridge, 1920; *Auto da Sibila Casandra*. Madrid, 1921.

It is strange that Portuguese literature should not have attracted a larger number of foreign critics, since, apart from its intrinsic merits, it contains a considerable number of fascinating problems. Were the early Galician-Portuguese lyrics indigenous? Was King Alfonso the Learned author of all the poems attributed to him? Was his grandson, King Dinis, author of all those printed under his name in the *Cancioneiro da Vaticana*? Was *Amadis de Gaula* written in Portuguese or Spanish? Did Fernam Lopez write the *Cronica do Condestabre*? Were the *Trovas de Crisfau* the work of Christovam Falcão or of his friend Bernardim Ribeiro? Was Ribeiro author of the Second Part of *Moça e menina*? These and many similar questions provide matter that deserves the attention of the acutest critics. In the

case of Vicente the chief questions that arise are, Where and when was he born? When did he die? Was he the goldsmith who wrought the Belem monstrance? None of these questions can be answered with absolute certainty, but light is thrown on them in many of the following

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G I L V I C E N T E

(c. 1465-1536?)



GIL VICENTE (*c.* 1465-1536?)

## I

GOLDSMITH, musician, actor, dramatist, lyric poet, Gil Vicente is one of the most interesting figures of the sixteenth century. Although the first half of his life was spent in the fifteenth century, we know nothing of him till seven years after the accession (1495) of King Manuel (1469-1521) and three years after the return of Vasco da Gama from his famous voyage to India (1497-9). Portugal for the next quarter of a century was in some measure the centre of Europe. The golden fruit of the tree planted by Prince Henry the Navigator (1394-1460) and watered by King João II (1481-95) fell into the lap of 'the most fortunate Emanuel'. Lisbon became an El Dorado thronged with

foreign travellers and ambassadors, Jews, negroes, and Portuguese provincials in search of fortune. The visible sign of this desired fortune was the King, who was the chief trader with India and the gold mine from which all hoped to obtain a nugget or two. The lowest of his subjects, even the humblest peasant, began to dream of serving the King, at home or in India. King Manuel not only reigned over a million or two of Portuguese, but was the sovereign of an ever-expanding empire in two continents. He was the son-in-law of Ferdinand and Isabella, the brother-in-law of Henry VIII of England. One of his daughters married the Emperor Charles V, another the Duke of Savoy. His widow became the wife of François I. He could dazzle a Pope and a Medici with his wonderful gifts from the East, and the ambassadors of no other Power were received with greater interest in all the Courts of Europe.

Gil Vicente was the King's, the Court poet, and the fact explains many charac-

teristics of his work. We may say that he is strangely familiar to us, for, although we know so little about him, his plays are more personal and less dramatic than those of most dramatists. Documents (1) tell us that the goldsmith of Queen Lianor was in February 1509 appointed overseer of the works in gold and silver at Lisbon, Belem, and Thomar, that three years later he was elected one of the Lisbon Twenty-Four by the Guild of Goldsmiths, that in 1513 he was appointed Master of the Mint (*Mestre da Balança*), a post which he held for four and a half years, and had a seat on the Lisbon Town Council, that in 1523 and the following years he received various pensions, and that in April 1540 he was dead. For the rest we have to go to his works, from which we learn that he took part, perhaps in 1509, in the poetical contest of Vasco Abul and the gold chain ; that he nearly died of the plague, probably in 1525 ; that in January 1531 he was at Santarem, and by his personal influence succeeded in restraining the zeal of the

monks and allaying the fears of the people there after a terrible earthquake ; and that he journeyed with the Court to various towns, but apparently never left Portugal, producing his plays during thirty-four years, from 1502 to 1536, at Lisbon, Almeirim, Thomar, Coimbra, and Evora. We do not know the exact date of his death, but it is probable that he survived but little the production of his last play at Evora in 1536, and that his death occurred there at the end of 1536 or at the beginning of the following year.

It may be doubted whether playwrights and actors wear their heart on their sleeve as conveniently as some critics suppose. The production of Vicente's *Comedia do Viuwo* in 1514 is taken to imply that he had just become the widower of his first wife, Branca Bezerra, and because an old man in his last play declares himself to be sixty-six, Vicente must have been born in 1470. This is especially embarrassing because in another of his plays, acted in 1513, another old man says that he is

sixty. These false inferences are worse than conjectures. We shall probably never know the exact year in which he was born, but may place it between 1460 and 1465. In yet another play, the *Auto da Festa* (2), we are told definitely that Gil Vicente is over sixty, but unfortunately the date of this play is extremely uncertain. The Conde de Sabugosa, one of Gil Vicente's most devoted admirers, in whose library exists the only known copy of this *Auto*, assigned it to 1535, but it seems to have been written certainly before the *Templo de Apolo* (January 1526).

## II

VERY few critics now dispute the fact that Queen Lianor's goldsmith, who wrought the beautiful Belem monstrance out of the first gold from the East, and the poet who wrote plays for the same Queen Lianor, widow of King João II and sister of King Manuel, were one and the same person. Those who, like Menéndez y Pelayo, in his delightful essay on Vicente, have expressed surprise that contemporary writers should not have called attention to the poet's artistic talent, forget that he had first made his mark at Court as an artist. His artistic talent was the reason for his presence there, but it was the 'new thing', the introduction of the drama in a monologue recited on the occasion of the birth of the future King João III in June 1502, that called for remark, and it was as actor and dramatic author that André de Resende and Garcia de Resende naturally referred to him. Later his poetical eclipsed his artistic fame, and the

historian João de Barros and the grammarian Fernam de Oliveira mention him in connexion with points of grammar. After the sixteenth century, in which a host of good, bad, or indifferent *autos* proclaimed his influence, interest in his person was at an end, and his memory was carried on by a very faint thread into the nineteenth century. In 1805 Bouterwek records the fact that 'no dramatic writer in Europe was more admired and esteemed than Gil Vicente' in the sixteenth century, but he scarcely knows whether this was due to his merits or to the barbarity of the age, and while he recognizes that Vicente's scenes 'succeed each other with wonderful truth and simplicity' (3), he deplores his lack of culture.

Since Bouterwek's day the study of Vicente has proceeded less intermittently, but critical examination of his life and works is scarcely more than a quarter of a century old, and English readers had to content themselves with the translation (1823) of Bouterwek, an article by Edward

Quillinan in *The Quarterly Review* (1845), and a few pages in Ticknor's *History of Spanish Literature* until Mr. Edgar Prestage published a study of Vicente in *The Manchester Quarterly* (July 1897). More recently the investigations of Senhor Anselmo Braamcamp Freire, General Brito Rebello, Dona Carolina Michaëlis de Vasconcellos, and Dr. Leite de Vasconcellos have paved the way for the first critical edition of Vicente, which Menéndez y Pelayo in 1898 confidently expected from 'the good fairy sent to Oporto for the glory of the literature of Spain and Portugal' (4).

The plays are forty-four in number, of which eleven are written exclusively in Spanish, sixteen in Portuguese (if we include the *Farsa de Ines Pereira*, which contains four verses in Spanish) and seventeen in mixed Portuguese and Spanish. These plays have been very variously judged. It has been objected against Vicente that he writes in the octosyllabic *redondilhas*, unsuitable for drama;

that he does not divide his plays into acts or scenes ; that he does not develop the plot, if there be one, or the characters ; and that he mingles comedy with tragedy. Some of his characters ingenuously describe themselves, and not always with Frei Paço's inimitable grace. Moreover his plays, although divided carefully into devotional plays, comedies, tragi-comedies, and farces, do not always warrant the division by their contents. But we must be careful not to judge Vicente as a Renaissance imitator of the classical drama : he was something better than that. Had he begun to write in 1527 instead of 1502 he might have fallen between two stools. As it is, his plays, with all their failings and immaturity, have an individual character and a genuine value. As dramatic pieces few of them, no doubt, are important. The action in the romantic comedy entitled *Comedia do Viuvo* is very slight. The *Auto da Alma* (1518?) is rather a lyrical poem than a great play, and, although in *Dom Duardos* (1525?) and the

*Sumario da Historia de Deos* (1527) he showed his skill in seizing on the essential parts of the story of Primaleon and the Bible, these two plays are not particularly dramatic. In the *Farsa de Ines Pereira* there is the same series of scenes but more unity in the development, while in the *Comedia de Rubena* and the *Barcas* there is a greater resemblance to a modern three-act play. There are passages in the *Barcas* which are not altogether unworthy of their remote ancestors, the *Frogs* of Aristophanes and the dialogues of Lucian. The *Comedia de Rubena* is especially interesting because it is derived from the same source as *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, and presents us in the person of Cismena with a Portuguese Marina, the common inspirer being John Gower in his *Confessio Amantis*, early translated into Portuguese and Spanish. Undoubtedly, Vicente's play owes more to this source than to Enzina's *Plácida y Vitoriano*, with which Menéndez y Pelayo connected it, and from which it derived its echo-scene.

*Plácida y Vitoriano* is really the story of Pyramus and Thisbe (told in detail in Diego de San Pedro's *Sermon*) with a happy ending ; the *Comedia de Rubena* is the story of a girl brought up far from her parents in a foreign land. The play opens with the birth of Cismena on a mountain, whither four devils, conjured up by a witch for the purpose, had carried off her mother Rubena from Tierra de Campos. (One wonders whether Vicente had any personal connexion with the north of Castille. He chose Burgos as the scene of the *Comedia do Viudo*, and in the same city a Spanish version of one of his plays was published immediately after his death.) In the second scene the same spirits at the bidding of the witch provide a nurse and a cradle, and two fairies come to bless the babe, who, however, in the same scene, is already a little shepherdess of five, sent by her *villanos amos* to keep the flocks, and chattering on the hills with other little shepherds. The fairies intervene and bid her go 'along this road ' to

Crete. In the third and longest scene she is fifteen, and sole heiress of a noble Cretan lady who had adopted her. She has many suitors, young and old, and is insidiously approached by a devout *beata* on behalf of one of them. She turns this *Celestina* out of the house, and after disdaining her other suitors accepts the true love of the Prince of Syria. The Portuguese dramatist Senhor Henrique Lopes de Mendonça has noted a similarity also between this play and *A Winter's Tale*. Totally lacking in unity of time or place, it is nevertheless in form Vicente's nearest approach to modern drama, but it is not his best play, and his claims to immortality rest on different grounds. Yet, considered merely as a dramatist, his achievement was very great, and it is easier, with his plays in one's hand, to foretell the advent of a Lope de Vega, a Calderón, a Shakespeare, a Molière, than to foresee Vicente's best plays from the work of his predecessors or contemporaries, or his own early productions.

## III

ALL the materials for drama were ready to his hand as they were to Enzina's or to Torres Naharro's. The dramatic elements in Spanish literature were especially prominent, and while Vicente began by simply imitating Enzina, he soon went further afield and found in Juan Ruiz, Archpriest of Hita, in *El Conde Lucanor*, in Gomez Manrique, Torres Naharro, Lucas Fernández, *La Celestina*, and other prose-writers and poets much matter to digest. French and Italian influence came to him mainly through Spanish literature, although he must probably have been acquainted at first hand with the *Farce de Maître Patelin*, written at about the time of his birth, and with some of the early French religious plays. If Vicente succeeded, as his Spanish contemporaries did not succeed, any more than the earlier French authors of *mystères*, *moralités*,

*farces*, and *sotties* had succeeded, in making the dry bones live, and if he did not allow his text to be subordinate to the splendid show which characterized the Portuguese *momos* and *entremeses*, this was due to the fact that he possessed a great lyrical and symbolical genius. He had a lyrical gift surpassed by very few poets of any age or country, he had genuine comic insight, and a real love of nature. He could feel the eternal poetry in things and in the dealings of men even when he noticed the absurdities. A critic speaking of the Spanish *gracioso* declared that in real life he would not be endured, but would simply be thrown out of the window; but Vicente, like Shakespeare, was wiser and truer to life, since the comical and incongruous will intrude, and cannot be got rid of with a mere *Viva Dios que pudo ser.*

We will do well, therefore, not to disdain Vicente's plums even if they be sometimes presented to us in a rough or inartistic basket. And what plums they are, many of them with the fresh bloom

still upon them! It is not merely the lyrics, incomparable as they are, in Portuguese—*Branca sois e colorada*; *Donde vides filha, branca e colorida?*; *Um amigo que eu havia*; or Spanish—*Del rosal vengo, mi madre*; *Muy graciosa es la doncella*; *En el mes era de Abril*; but the lyrical beauty of page on page of soliloquy or dialogue. Nor is the attraction of his plays limited to the lyrics and lyrical passages. His comic talent holds us by its variety, its occasional insight into character, as in the *fidalgo* of the *Farsa dos Almocreves* (1527) or *Frei Paço* of the *Romagem de Aggravados* (1533), its vivid presentment of contemporary types, its mediaeval delight in contrasts, the conflict between winter and spring, the shrew and the timid wife, the sluggard and the perpetual dancer, the old man or old woman in love, the negro trying to speak Portuguese or Spanish, the Beira rustic (*ratinho*) at Court. But his comedy is not exclusively of an external and burlesque kind. There is the broad humour of the

lament of Maria Parda because she saw wine so dear and she could not live without it ; but there is also a more subtle and delicate humour in some of his situations and characters.

His use of language, Portuguese or Spanish (with *lusitanismos*), is likewise founded partly on contrasts, and forms an interesting study. The first plays, 'a new thing in Portugal', imitated directly from the jejune Eclogues of Enzina, and acted before a half-Spanish Court, were naturally written in Spanish, as were the later *Comedia do Viuvo* (1514), and the dramatizations of the stories of Primaleon and Amadis. The slight *Farsa das Ciganas* (1525?) is in Spanish, spoken with a lisp, the *cecear cigano de Sevilha* to which Barros alludes. In *Quem tem farelos?* (1508?), the first play in which Vicente uses Portuguese, the scene is Lisbon and the poor gentleman, *escudeiro*, although he sings snatches of song in Spanish, speaks (and sings) in Portuguese. But there are two *moços*, Spanish and Portuguese, and,

as if to show that the type of poor gentleman was as familiar at Toledo as at Lisbon, he is vividly described for us in both languages. Religious plays in which there are no peasant scenes, as the *Auto da Alma* (1518?), the *Auto da Historia de Deos*, the *Auto da Cananea* (1534), are in Portuguese, as is the national *Exhortaçam da Guerra* (1513), and, but for the 'Italian', 'French', and Spanish of Fame's suitors, the *Auto da Fama* (1515?). In those plays which include both peasants and persons of high rank, the latter as a rule speak Spanish, the former Portuguese.

That one of the objects was contrast is shown by the *Auto da Fe* (1510), in which, since Faith must speak in Portuguese, the peasants use Spanish, and in the *Auto da Mofina Mendes* (1534) and the *Auto da Feira* (1528), where the peasant-scenes are separate from the rest of the play, all is in Portuguese. In Portuguese are plays confined entirely to scenes of peasant life, as the *Auto Pastoril Portugues* (1523) and the *Serra da Estrella* (1527). In the

*Barca do Purgatorio* (1518) all are of low degree, in the *Barca do Inferno* (1517) the *fidalgo* and *corregedor* have forgotten their Court Spanish, but the *Barca da Gloria* (1519), containing only persons of very exalted position, is in Spanish. They were, moreover, or so the audience would willingly have believed, foreigners. Vicente here, as ever, wished to be true to life. When the speaker is Spanish or a foreigner, or of high rank, or a courtier, he as a rule uses Spanish. There seems also to have been some idea that Spanish allowed greater scope and was more fitted for imaginary figures. In introducing the *Triunfo do Inverno* (1529), Vicente says: 'Wild Winter comes, Spanish is his speech, since he who wishes to invent will find in the Spanish language all that he desires'; but perhaps this was a mere gibe against Spain. In the *Floresta de Enganos* (1536) the philosopher, Cupid, King Telebano and his daughter, the Judge, the Duke, the Prince of Greece, speak in Spanish, the two servant girls and the

shepherd in Portuguese. In *O Juiz da Beira* (1525?), the cobbler, who alone speaks Spanish, is a new Christian from Castille. The Castilian, of course, speaks Spanish in the *Auto da India* (1509) as in the *Auto da Fama*. Only the Greek goddesses do so in the *Auto da Lusitânia* (1532), and they lisp like the gypsies who say they are from Greece in the *Farsa das Ciganas*. In the *Auto das Fadas* (1511) the Devil speaks Picardese, which to us, as to the witch, is 'German' and *aravia*, and a friar from Hell discourses in Spanish. The love-lorn priest and his confessor use Spanish in the *Farsa dos Fisicos* (1512), his servant, the *moço*, and three of the four doctors Portuguese. In the *Templo de Apolo* all speak Spanish with the exception of the Portuguese *vilão*. The *lavrador*, who speaks in Spanish in the *Divisa da Cidade de Coimbra* (1527), is *o muito nobre lavrador*, and the hermit proves to be King Ceridon 'of Cordoba and Andalucía', while Monderigon is a giant from Ar-

menia. In the *Fragoa de Amor* (1524) Venus, Cupid, the pilgrims, use Spanish, Justice and the humbler persons, the friar, the fool, the pages, Portuguese. The *serranas* (shepherdesses) who speak in Spanish are Planets, and the negro's language, more Spanish than Portuguese, 'represents the speech of his country'. The Prince of Normandy, in the *Nao de Amores* (1527), speaks in Spanish, the Portuguese-speaking *fidalgos* are expressly said to be Portuguese, and the Spanish-speaking shepherd a Spaniard. The old man who uses Spanish is also apparently a foreigner. In the *Comedia de Rubena* (1521) all speak in Portuguese except Rubena, who is a Castilian, her daughter, and the Prince of Syria; and in the *Auto da Festa* (1525?) all except the gypsies (as foreigners). In the *Triunfo do Inverno* Winter and Spring use Spanish, and so do the two Spanish shepherds, Juan Guijarro and Brisco Pelayo: the old woman uses Portuguese, as well as the Infante, who is a Portuguese prince. There remain three

apparent exceptions: *O Clerigo da Beira* (1529?), *Os Almocreves* (1527), and the *Romagem de Aggravados* (1533). Since they are all late plays one might see in this the changing taste which, after Vicente's death, caused dramatists to place Spanish on the lips of their peasants, reserving Portuguese for persons of higher rank, or to use either language promiscuously. But one would like to think that there was a subtler reason (one may dismiss *O Clerigo da Beira*, since the two Portuguese-speaking Court pages were by no means of so lofty an origin as they would have us believe): that the artistic sense of Vicente was as enchanted as is the modern reader with his Frei Paço and Falstaffian *fidalgo*, and refused to allow them to speak in a foreign tongue.

## IV

IN his satire, Vicente's themes were partly popular and mediaeval : the shrewd but ignorant judge, as in *Trancoso* and *Don Quixote*; the Jews, less cruelly treated than in the *Cantigas* of King Alfonso X; the doctors, to be pilloried later by Molière in a way reminiscent of Vicente's *Farsa dos Fisicos*; above all, the monks and priests, the butt of popular wit during the Middle Ages and later. Ridicule, mockery, and open abuse are poured upon the heads of the clergy, regular and secular, in Vicente's plays; and it is not the humble parish priest or mendicant friar alone that are attacked, but chaplain, bishop, cardinal, and pope. It may seem extraordinary that the poet of the very devout kings of Portugal should be one of the most violent critics of Rome. But he attacked not the

Church but the abuses, even as a devoted friend of Spain might protest against Spanish administration. A play of Vicente's, acted at Brussels towards the end of his life, in 1531, horrified the Nuncio, Cardinal Aleandro. The letter, in which he describes the play, was unearthed by Dona Carolina Michaëlis de Vasconcellos in the archives of the Vatican Library, and is full of piquancy :

... fu recitata presente mundo una commedia *ιβεριστὶ καὶ λυσιτανιστὶ* di una mala sorte, che sotto nome di un Jubileu d'Amor era manifesta satyra contra di Roma, sempre nominando apertamente ogni cosa, che da Roma e dal Papa non veniva senon vendition di Indulgentie e chi non dava danari non era absoluto ma excomunicato da bel nuovo, et così cominciò et perseverò et finì la commedia, et era uno principal che parlava, vestito con un roccchetto da Vescovo et fingeasi Vescovo et havea una baretta Cardinalesca in testa, havuta da casa del Reverendissimo Legato, datali per ho [ciò?] senza che gli nostri sapessero per che fine ; et era tanto il riso di tutti che parea tutto il mundo jubilasse ;

a me veramente crepava il cuore paren-domi essere in meggia Sassonia ad udir Luther over esser nelle pene del sacco di Roma . . . (5)

(There was recited in the presence of all a comedy in Spanish and Portuguese, of an evil kind, which, under the title of 'A Jubilee of Love', was an open satire against Rome, naming everything explicitly, to the effect that from Rome and the Pope only came the sale of indulgences, and he who did not give money was not absolved but simply excommunicated; and so the comedy began and continued and ended, and the principal speaker was dressed up as a Bishop and had a Cardinal's hat on his head, obtained from the house of the most reverend Legate, and given by our people without knowing the object; and the general laughter was such that every one seemed to be rejoicing, but my heart was beating as if I were in mid-Saxony, listening to Luther, or in the sorrows of the sack of Rome.)

Yet Vicente continued for some thirty years to produce plays attacking and de-

riding the clergy, and the absence of such allusions in his last plays is probably merely accidental. During the first third of the sixteenth century the relations between Rome and the Kings of the Earth were the subject of constant discussion. King Henry VIII definitively cut them, and other monarchs might threaten to follow suit unless abuses were redressed. King Manuel, and his father-in-law, King Ferdinand, sent a protest to Pope Alexander II in no honeyed terms concerning the dissolute habits of the clergy and the traffic in Bulls and other matters at which all Christianity stood aghast. Clearly it would strengthen the hands of a ruler negotiating with Rome if the abuses were denounced in the plays of a popular dramatist. The popularity of Vicente is proved by the fact that the common people changed the name of some of his plays. They were acted not merely at Court but in private houses, and many of them were printed separately in his lifetime and were eagerly read. His anti-

clerical attacks were especially frequent and penetrating during the negotiations of King João III with the Vatican for the establishment of the Inquisition in Portugal, negotiations the seamy side of which has been laid bare by a great modern historian, Alexandre Herculano. (6) The Holy See received bribes from the Jews in Portugal and from the Ambassador of João III. But King João gave less. According to secret instructions issued by the Vatican in 1542 King João and his brothers 'have never shown goodwill towards Rome'. (7)

Vicente's play, the *Auto da Feira* (1528), was produced a few years after King João's accession. It was played on Christmas morning before the King and Court. Mercury first enters and, after a long speech full of nonsense, declares that he is inaugurating a general fair, of which Time is to be the chief merchant. Time enters and says that he will sell or rather barter all manner of virtues, good advice, reason, justice, truth, and peace, which

seem to have disappeared from Christendom, and the fear of God 'lost in every state', since the wordly-wise buyers now attend the Devil's fair. A seraph sent by God then appears, and invites all men to the fair of Time, the fair of the Virgin, and especially the 'churches, monasteries, pastors of souls, and Popes asleep'. The Devil now enters as a pedlar and boasts that he can always drive a roaring trade; he is arguing with Time and the Seraph when Rome enters, singing, and absorbs their attention. The Christians themselves are the death of her, she says. The Devil beseeches her to buy, but she does not like his looks. He begs her not to be misled by appearances. He has thousands of lies :

For ladies and for gentlemen,  
For lovers, every specimen.

The answer of Rome is unexpected : she has already bought all that, 'and other dirty wares, a thousand vile and evil practices'. She then turns to Time and to

Mercury, who tells her that ' he who is at war with God cannot have peace with the world '. She expresses a wish for peace, but he answers that she should ask herself whether she can have peace if she does not fear God : consider whom you are striving against ; for I fear that you will fall. So then, she replies, peace is not to be had in return for jubilees, and Mercury addresses her in the celebrated lines :

O Rome, I have always seen  
That against others' sins you're keen,  
And allow your own to thrive ;  
Half ruined on your throne you sit,  
And the whole world's sins remit,  
But forget yourself to shrive.

He bids Time give her a casket of good counsels and a looking-glass that she may dress herself more meetly and mend her ways :

Lost thou shalt be utterly  
Unless a new life thou begin,  
Nor be the world's kings blamed by thee,  
For all comes on thee from within.

Rome then goes out, and a troop of peasants from the hills comes down to attend the fair.

Nine years earlier Vicente had criticized the lives of a Pope and Cardinal in his *Barca da Gloria* (1519). In the *Barca do Inferno* (1517) the satire was directed against a *fidalgo*, an usurer, an idiot, a cobbler, a monk, a procuress, a Jew, a judge, a solicitor, and a hanged man as they arrive, after death, at the Devil's boat, eager to waft them across the flood to Hell. The *Barca do Purgatorio* (1518) consisted entirely of humble figures, ploughman, market-woman, shepherd, girl shepherdess, boy, and gambler. But at the opening of the *Barca da Gloria* the Devil complains to Death that in the two previous voyages he has only had one gentleman. Death promises to oblige him, and a Count is forthwith brought, who, the Devil says, had during his lifetime been full of pride and vanity, bowing down to vice and luxury, without fear of God, and will now have his reward. A

Duke is brought in by Death in the same way, and then a King. The Devil tells the latter merrily that he is to dwell in yonder fires. He had been adored in life, without thought of being mortal; haughty towards the great, careless of the poor, decreeing unjust wars. An Emperor then comes who had been regarded almost as a god on earth, he had been cruel and reckless, and died of vainglory. It is now the turn of the Church. Death brings a Bishop, who had earned a place in the Boat of Hell by his pride, although, as the Devil slyly adds, he was loved by his children. Then follow an Archbishop, who is upbraided for his avarice and ambition (*deseos de papar*), a Cardinal, who, far from being grateful to God for having been raised from a humble estate to the purple, had died weeping that he had not been even two days pope, and finally a Pope, who, instead of giving the example that his high position demanded, has been licentious, proud, and simoniacial. Each of Death's victims in turn goes to implore

the Angels in the Boat of Heaven, confessing his sins, and finally they are all gathered in and take their places on the celestial thwarts. This happy ending and comfortable doctrine was worth waiting for, and King Manuel, before whom the play was acted, must have murmured: *finis coronat opus*. Very few among the audience would remember that in the *Auto da Alma*, acted in the previous year, it was the Devil tempting the soul who had declared that it might go on sinning since in the hour of death all its sins would be forgiven.

This was the only occasion on which Vicente painted a king in unfavourable colours; as a rule, the king and the royal family were immune from his attacks. Lord and peasant, priest and official, were tossed in his blanket, but the King was Portugal, and Vicente was intensely patriotic. Satire is present in his *Exhortaçam da Guerra* and in the *Auto da Fama*, but through and above the satire is evident a deep pride in the achievements of the

Portuguese in Africa and India. Portuguese Fame, a country girl of the province, 'our province', of Beira, is wooed by a Frenchman, an Italian, and a Spaniard, but for all answer she bids them go ask Venice how it fares, and whose is now Guinea and Brazil and the commerce of Arabia and Persia, and the cities of Africa and India, Ormuz, Malacca, Aden ; for the victories of the Portuguese, their 'conquests and great adventures', make Mecca sad, and Turkey and Babylon are in mourning, Morocco is cowed, Jerusalem threatened. This *Auto da Fama* is a paean worthy of the deeds of Albuquerque in the East, and it strikes a note even more strongly national and imperialist than the *Exhortaçam da Guerra*, written two years earlier, which is more satirical and rather an incitement to great deeds than a celebration of glory won. Satire is also present occasionally in his devotional pieces, but through all his ridicule of monks and attacks on the clergy shines a strong faith and steadfast

religion. He advocated reforms, and possibly, during the last ten years of his life, wished to support King João III in his negotiations with the Holy See; but neither he nor the King his master wished to separate from Rome.

## V

VICENTE's plays served to pass many a merry evening at Court, but they also served a serious purpose, for he was a thinker and a keen lover of his country. In spite of his evenly distributed satire and the carping of critics he seems to have been a general favourite. Of humble birth, born perhaps in some village or small town in the north of Portugal, probably in the province of Beira—if he had been born at the already cosmopolitan Lisbon and bred at Court he would scarcely have been capable of introducing genuine popular poetry and customs into his plays—his position was not exalted enough to be a mark for envy. Stout, good-natured, loving the good things of life, but dreamy, contemplative, with a mystic strain and a natural piety, standing a little apart from the rest, he succeeded in maintaining his prestige through thirty-

four years of continual change. He won the respect of two, probably of three kings of Portugal, and was further patronized by some of the great nobles. He had his ups and downs, he complains from time to time that he has not a penny, and that while others prosper he is left in the background ; and he was brought to death's door by the plague. In verses addressed to the Conde de Vimioso he says that he who serves for love, the more he serves the less he presses his claims, and that he who does not ask does not receive, and he who hopes is mocked by suffering : 'in my own interests I have always been dumb.'

Yet early in King João III's reign he had received several pensions, and this adds to the difficulty of fixing the date of these verses. They were formerly almost unanimously assigned to 1518, but Senhor Braamcamp Freire (8) has recently stated that Gonzalo de Ayora, described in them as thriving at the Portuguese Court, only came to Portugal in 1520. Vicente in

these verses, written in the time of the plague, complains that he is brought to death's door. In the *Templo de Apolo*, acted in January 1526, he also says that 'in these last days' (that is the end of 1525) he has been reduced by fever to death's door. There was plague at Lisbon in 1523 and 1525, but it is unlikely that he should have been twice so afflicted within three years. At the same time it is curious that he should complain of possessing and receiving nothing if these verses were written in 1525, since in the previous year he had been granted two pensions which together amounted to more than was ever given to Camões. But Vicente, like the old man in his *O Velho da Horta* (1513), was probably well able to spend whatever he earned. It is certainly tempting to assign the verses to the end of 1525, the year of the death of Vicente's patroness, Queen Lianor, and to believe that the play which he announces in them, the *Caça dos Segredos*, is the *Auto da Lusitania* (1532), which,

he says, he had long kept for the birth of the Prince, after searching for secrets in the Sibyl's cave for seven years and a day, and which answers to the gay character of the 'fine farce' at which Vicente was working when he wrote to Vimioso.

It was not only with the Conde de Vimioso that he corresponded, for we still have a long letter in prose written by him to King João III after the earthquake of 1531, which caught the poet at Santarem. It begins bluntly, without fear of offending the King in blaming the monks: 'the monks here did not satisfy me'; and he then gives the text of the sermon which he preached to them, and says that he sends it in writing, 'until God give you rest and contentment, as is desired throughout your realms, and I can tell you what is here omitted'. The King was evidently friendly towards the poet, but he was often busy and care-worn. The year 1525 was a bad year for Vicente, and the return of Sá de Miranda from Italy added to his perplexities. There was now

a new school which considered any metre shorter than the hendecasyllabic rather unrefined and set itself industriously to imitate the Italians in elegy, ode, and sonnet. Fortunately Vicente and Vicente's patrons were wise enough to see that with all his extraordinary versatility he had best keep to his national *autos* and native *redondilhas*, and he continued to produce his plays in the old octosyllabic metre till the end of his life. Vicente trying his hand at a Petrarchan sonnet would have been a bird in a cage indeed.

Yet he could not help feeling that the glory had departed. In the *Farsa de Ines Pereira* and the *Auto da Sibila Cassandra* (1513?) he had noted the difficult position of women and their lack of liberty ; in the *Fragoa de Amor* he laments the corruption of justice ; in the *Triunfo do Inverno* he satirized the ignorance and presumption of the pilots, through which many a good ship was lost on the way to and from the Indies. He was peculiarly happy in drawing the figure of the poverty-stricken

nobleman whose revenues shrink and shrink like Alcobaça cloth, the poor gentleman who must make a sixpence last a month or subsists by letting out his mule for hire, or the upstart peasant or vulgar new rich. Above all he regrets the change from the old simple mirth and the confusion, the sadness, and the dishonesty of the times. The gloom which fell upon Portugal is sometimes attributed entirely to the Inquisition, but here is Vicente ten years before the Inquisition was introduced into Portugal bemoaning the loss in the last twenty years of the natural gaiety of the Portuguese. And his was not merely the querulous criticism of a *laudator temporis acti*, since he preserved his own merry wit to the end. The influence of the Court had been heavy upon him, and we may be sure that his allusions to courtiers, whether they contained praise or blame, or to Court families, as at the end of the *Divisa da Cidade de Coimbra*, were received with far greater applause than the most beautiful of his lyrics.

One may wish that he had had some years in retirement to see his last of the country, which he so evidently loved ; but he appears to have died in harness, at Evora. He was probably dead when the Spanish translation (with additions) of the *Barca do Inferno* was printed anonymously at Burgos (1539) ; in any case, the Spanish translation of the play is not the work of its author. He was certainly dead before the end of April 1540.

It was partly mediaeval influence and partly his own real sympathy and connexion with the peasantry, as well as the fact that the peasant of Beira was a recognized source of comedy, which induced Vicente to study popular types. The people lives for us in his plays as it lives in the *Cantigas* of King Alfonso X and in the chronicles of Fernan Lopez. They contain over fifty complete lyrics and a hundred fragments of lyrics, mainly of a popular character, and upwards of a hundred proverbs. The original poetry of Galicia and Portugal, which in the hands of Zorro,

Meogo, Codax, and others, flowered so beautifully in the old *Cancioneiros* and survives in the *Cancioneiro da Vaticana*, flowered afresh in the *autos* of Gil Vicente. He succeeded, like a later Galician writer, Rosalía de Castro, in identifying himself with the popular genius to such an extent that some of his *cossantes* in their simplicity and natural music come as near as it is possible to come to anonymous popular poetry. It is hard to believe that lyrics of such beauty were really sung by the carrier on the highway, the shepherd on the hills, or the tailor in his shop at Lisbon. But if Vicente added a touch of his own genius, as he no doubt emphasized the peasants' manner of speech, he would not, in his constant desire to be true to life, have assigned them to persons of humble station were not songs of the kind, the old parallel-strophed songs which survived even into the nineteenth century, in very truth sung by the people in town and country.

These *cossantes* were really a dramatic

element, as was, in another sense, the dialogue of the *pastorelas*, for, whether grave, almost religious, or profane and merry, they were accompanied by dancing. In Vicente's plays song almost invariably goes hand in hand with action. The players enter and leave the stage singing and dance as they sing. But Vicente did not confine himself to the songs of the people. He took their customs and superstitions, the life of the shepherds, the ways of witches; of gypsies, of carriers, of the Lisbon people, and wove it all into a singularly attractive and curious medley full of life, the vigorous life of Portugal in the fifteenth century.

## VI

LET us take as typical of Vicente's drama, not the *Barcas*, in which the lives of those recently dead, from shepherdess to pope, are passed in review; not the *Farsa de Ines Pereira*, in which Ines, disregarding her sensible mother's advice, finds by bitter experience that the accomplished gentleman who can play and sing may not be an ideal husband and visits her disenchantment on her first suitor and second husband, rustic Pero Marques; nor *O Velho da Horta*, in which a rich old man falls in love with a girl gathering herbs in his garden (he courts and sings to her, but she mockingly rejects his advances, and he is abused by his wife and plundered by Branca Gil, a Portuguese Celestina, and the play ends with the girl's marriage to a man of her own age, while Branca Gil is whipped through the town); nor the *Auto da Lusitania*, in the first part of which a Jewish family is pre-

sented: the father, a flourishing tailor, his wife and children, the eldest daughter being stealthily wooed by a courtier (the second and longer part, introduced by some burlesque verses about Gil Vicente, tells how Portugal came from Hungary and fell in love with Lusitania, fair daughter of Lisibea and the Sun, born at the foot of the Serra da Sintra; among the *dramatis personae* are Venus, Juno, May, who is the Sun's messenger, Everyman and Nobody); nor the *Auto da Mofina Mendes*, which likewise consists of two parts: in the first, after the play has been introduced by a monk's long and pedantic sermon in verse, to the Virgin (accompanied by Poverty, Faith, and Prudence), the Angel Gabriel announces the Saviour's birth, while in the second the shepherds André, Payo Vaz, Pessival come to greet the new-born Saviour, and Mofina Mendes ('Misfortune Personified'), dismissed by her master, who finds her services most ruinous to his flocks, with a parting gift of a pot of oil,

proposes to sell the oil at the fair, and buy eggs and sell the ducks, and marry and dance and sing. (She dances and sings, the pot of oil falls and breaks, and she goes off singing :

All human delight even so,  
As my pot of oil will go,  
And speedily fall to the ground.)

The Virgin and the Virtues then re-enter, and the Angel announces the birth to the sleeping shepherds. Still less the Court plays, in which Vicente's original genius turned aside to chronicle some great event at Court, such as the wedding of the Infanta Beatriz and the Duke of Savoy in the *Cortes de Jupiter* (1521), in which God sends Providence to bid Jupiter assemble the signs and planets and prepare a prosperous voyage, while the Court officials and priests are to accompany the princess swimming from Lisbon to the mouth of the Tagus ; or the marriage of another of King Manuel's daughters, the Infanta Isabel, to her first cousin, the

Emperor Charles V, in the *Templo de Apolo*, in which Victory, Sceptre, Glorious Time, Virtuous Fame, Prudent Gravity, and Honest Wisdom come to Apollo's temple to serve the Emperor and Empress ; or the entry of the King and Queen into Lisbon, in the *Nao de Amores*.

The birth of a prince or princess was also generally celebrated by the presentation of one of Vicente's plays ; the *Tragicomedia da Serra da Estrella*, a purely pastoral play of shepherds' crossed loves, like the *Auto Pastoril Portugues* (1523), was composed for such an occasion. These pastoral plays came no doubt as a foil and relief after plays of topical Court allusions. But we will rather take as characteristic of Vicente's dramatic talent his first farce, that of the Poor Squire, to which the Lisbon people in the sixteenth century gave the name by which it has since been known, *Quem tem farelos?* and the 'tragi-comedy' written towards the end of his life and entitled *Triunfo do Inverno*.

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*Quem tem farelos?* tells of the love of the poor squire Aires Rosado for Isabel, the aspiring daughter of a level-headed but irascible old woman of Lisbon. His valet and groom in one, Apariço, and a Spanish servant, Ordonho, are first on the scene and they discuss their masters in direct and uncompromising terms, their unflattered portraits deserving to rank with those of his various masters etched a little later by Lazarillo de Tormes. Then Aires Rosado appears, song-book in hand, and after a few words with Apariço goes to serenade Isabel, who is understood to answer him from a window. Dogs bark, cats mew, cocks crow, and Aires courts and sings, while Isabel's mother, awakened by the noise, is seen at the window and pours out a steady flow of curses. For nearly a hundred lines she continues, until the poor squire, unable to bear her final injunction that he should earn his bread as a tailor or a weaver, beats a retreat, singing: 'Here, O here remains my heart'. The farce ends with a brief conversation

between Isabel and her mother, in which the former declares that the toil best suited to her charms is the adornment of her person with a view to securing a husband. How she fared when she achieved her object may be conjectured from the fate of Ines Pereira in a later farce.

In its gaiety and concentration *Quem tem farelos?* is perhaps the best of the farces, but similar scenes, overflowing with life and malice, occur in the *Auto da India* (1509), which describes the behaviour of a faithless Lisbon woman when her husband is away in India, *O Juiz da Beira*, in which Ines Pereira's simple second husband plays the judge in Lisbon, *Os Almocreves*, in which a nobleman pays his chaplain, goldsmith, and carrier with fair words and mocking compliments, *O Clerigo da Beira* (1529?), in which a priest and his son go a rabbiting; and the longer, loosely built *Romagem de Aggravados* (1533) and *Floresta de Enganos*.

The *Triunfo do Inverno* is divided into

three parts: the Triumph of Winter, in two parts, and the Triumph of Spring, each part being subdivided roughly into scenes (*figuras*). The author introduces the play in a long prologue in verse, in which he bewails the loss of the unforced gaiety of former times—twenty years or so agone—in Portugal, and then Winter (probably Vicente) appears, speaking in Spanish. He has a long altercation with Brisco, a shepherd, who enters singing, as presently another shepherd, Juan Guijarro. Brisco and Juan converse and Winter then introduces an old woman in search of a young husband (wrinkled Winter taking refuge from Spring in the mountain tops). She is accosted by Brisco, but persists in trying to cross the snowy *serra* and falls prostrate but still undefeated in spirit, averring that she has but caught her foot in her dress. The second Triumph of Winter is in mid ocean and presents a ship in distress: the pilot attempts to weather the storm, but his ignorance and obstinacy prove fatal. This triumph ends

with the entrance of three sirens who sing first a *vilancete*, then a long *romance*, and Winter addresses a few last words to the King (João III) with evident signs of weariness. Now begins the Triumph of Spring, and Winter beseeches the sirens to sing no more since his great enemy is at the door. Spring enters with the Spanish lyric *Del rosal vengo* and bids the clouds and mists be gone. Spring is made welcome to Portugal by the Serra de Sintra. The third scene consists of a burlesque dialogue between a bakeress and her husband, a blacksmith, who both complain of Spring, wishing that the year were always at *genero* (January). At the end of this long play, which abounds in curious episodes and lyrical beauty, a Portuguese prince appears, and some peasants of Sintra present to the King a garden of virtuous flowers; they all go out singing. It is thoroughly Portuguese in character, although written in Portuguese and Spanish.

The *Romagem de Aggravados* and the

*Floresta de Enganos* consist of disconnected scenes, although in the former Frei Paço, whose appearance and gestures must have kept the audience in continual good-humour, provides a certain consistency by his presence. To him a peasant brings his son to learn to be a priest, and he listens to two lovers discoursing on love until he can contain himself no longer and interrupts them, sighing: 'And not a word from Frei Paço!' He then vainly attempts to pacify two Lisbon market-women, and after in characteristic and delightful fashion instructing the country girl Giralda in the ways of the Court, he receives the complaints of two Sicilian nuns and two shepherdesses. The *Floresta de Enganos* is even more variegated. It is introduced by a scene between a philosopher and a fool. There comes a short but extremely vivid farce in which a merchant is swindled by a penniless squire dressed up as a poor widow woman. The main body of the play consists of a variant of the famous story of Cupid and Psyche, but sandwiched

in between the two parts of this story is the truly comical scene in which an old but amorous judge is made fun of by the servant girl who is the object of his attentions. Discovered in the kitchen in the garb of an old negress, he is mercilessly mocked by mistress and maid till he flees without a word. He would be a rash critic who should assert that Vicente composed these two plays at the time of their production: more probably he put them together from scenes written earlier in his career.

## VII

OF the eleven plays written entirely in Spanish, five are insignificant: the *Visitaçam*, also entitled *Monologo do Vaqueiro*, with which on the night of June 7, 1502, Vicente began his dramatic career, and which consists of a monologue of 114 lines; the slightly more developed Christmas play *Auto Pastoril Castelhano* (1502), in which six shepherds are presented on their way to Bethlehem; the *Auto dos Reis Magos* (1503) with two shepherds, a knight, and a hermit, and at the end the three wise men from the East singing a *vilancete*; the *Farsa das Ciganas* with eight gypsy horse-dealers and fortune-tellers; and the fragmentary *Auto de S. Martinho* (1504). Of the others the most interesting from a dramatic point of view are the *Barca da Gloria* and the comedy of 'The Widower'. But the *Auto da Sibila Cassandra*, which develops the ancient

theme of the Sibyl on Christmas Day foretelling the coming of Christ, *Dom Duardos* and *Amadis de Gaula*, and the *Auto dos Quatro Tempos* (1516?) contain some of Vicente's most delightful lyrics and lyrical passages. The latter is also a Christmas play (thus corresponding, as others among his plays, to the early popular *representações* at Christmas or on the Day of Kings (the *reisadas*) or in Holy Week). After a hymn of exultation spoken by the seraph and the singing of a *vilancete*, the four seasons enter and are contrasted. Winter and Spring sing, but Summer and Autumn are more sober-minded. Then Jupiter enters and in a long monologue announces that the reign of the heathen gods is over and with the seasons goes to worship the new-born Christ, singing an incongruous French song. Jupiter worships for himself and on behalf of the other pagan gods, and finally David comes, bringing as his only present a broken spirit and a contrite heart, and the play ends with a *Te Deum*.

## VIII

IT seems a far cry from these simple plays to the masterpieces of Shakespeare. Yet the question—Was Shakespeare directly or indirectly influenced by Vicente?—is by no means so absurd as it might at first appear. Vicente was recognized as one of the great dramatists of his day, and only two years elapsed between the publication of the first edition of his plays and the birth of Shakespeare. He wrote partly in Spanish, a language which was then very widely studied in Europe, and which Shakespeare seems to have known well. Several Shakespeare plays were derived from Spanish sources, and one, *The Tempest*, followed very closely on the publication of its Spanish source. Shakespeare's allusions to Spain are very numerous, he uses Spanish phrases and gives an English garb to others. We need not lay stress on the fact that the authors of *Pericles*, *Prince*

*of Tyre*, went to the same source as did Vicente in his *Comedia de Rubena*, still less on the recurrence in Shakespeare of the pun (How called?—No one was calling) in Vicente's *Os Almocreves*. Yet it seems certain that Shakespeare's Falstaff owed something to the traditional type of the splendid and penniless *hidalgo*, a type which Vicente had drawn so well, magnificently irrepressible, in this play. The play of Vicente's entitled *Jubileu de Amores*, acted in the house of the Portuguese Ambassador at Brussels in 1531, which scandalized the papal Nuncio, must have considerably extended Vicente's fame in Europe, and brought his name to the ears of Erasmus, perhaps not for the first time.

Shakespeare for his part would naturally be interested in the Portuguese Will—*Gillo*, as without surname André de Resende referred to him in his *Genethliacon*. At any rate we may say that Vicente, whose *autos* plainly overshadowed those of his successors in Portugal, influenced

many great writers in Spain, notably Calderón and Lope de Vega, and that, indirectly at least, this influence may have extended to Shakespeare and to Molière. In 1562 Vicente's devoted and distinguished daughter Paula and his son Luis dedicated the first edition of his plays to King Sebastian, who was their keen admirer. Twenty-four years later, when Shakespeare was twenty-two, appeared the second edition, the last for 250 years. It was in every way inferior to the first, now a treasured bibliographical rarity. The Censor's hand had been heavy, and several plays were omitted and all more or less mutilated.

## IX

IN Spain, naturally more dramatic, the influence of Vicente was, if not more abiding, certainly more important than in his native land, which forty years after his death was overspread by the sadness of Alcacer Kebir. It is seen in the *pasos* of Lope de Rueda, in the plays of Micael de Carvajal, who continued Luis Hurtado's *Las Cortes de la Muerte* (1557), based partly on Vicente's *Barcas* and in many other more or less obscure *autos* as well as in the work of the great dramatists. A Portuguese writer in the seventeenth century, Thomé Pinheiro da Veiga (c. 1570-1656), quotes Gil Vicente, without naming him, twice, and both the quotations are from the Spanish play *Dom Duardos*, which was printed several times early in the seventeenth century: the first line of the *romance* *En el mes era de Abril* (9) and the line *cahirá flor sobre flores*. (10)

Vicente's Spanish play *Amadis de Gaula* was also frequently reprinted. There are editions of 1589 and 1612, and perhaps another just before the date of the second edition of the complete works. That assigned to 1586 seems to be an error of the bibliographer Barbosa Machado, a confusion with the edition contained in the complete works of that year or with the edition of 1589, but the ascription by Moratín of an *Amadis de Gaula* to Andrés Rey de Artieda in 1581 is perhaps a mistake due to an anonymous 1581 edition of Vicente's play.

In Portugal, against the combined influence of the Inquisition, the Latin plays of the Jesuits, the Renaissance, and the national disasters, even Vicente's genius was unavailing. Yet the old Portugal of Vicente survives even to-day in some of the provinces, and unless Portugal as a whole succeeds in Europeanizing and internationalizing herself to extinction, Vicente's influence is destined to play a large part in the future literature of his

country. If in the last twenty years of his life he sometimes felt misgivings as to his country's future, he would certainly have sought for himself no greater reward than to be able to assist, four centuries after his death, in the rebuilding of the nation after an upheaval similar to that experienced by Portugal during his lifetime.

In dialogue vivacious as Plautus, in satire broad and reckless as Aristophanes, in portraiture pitilessly life-like as the author of *Lazarillo de Tormes*, in lyric poetry an Elizabethan before Elizabeth, with the elusive charm of the early Galician poetry, but with the concrete force of an artist and the fervent ecstasy of a mystic, this many-sided dramatist is well suited to the modern dislike of artificiality (if it be literary) and rhetoric. He is not suited to the modern stage, his stagecraft consisted in presenting a show as fine as could be devised, a miniature ship, a tower, a forge, and then, with no plot and little action, the actors have their say and the

play ends with music, dance, and song. But all his plays, short and long, simple and intricate, religious, burlesque, pastoral or patriotic, deserve to be read because, although some are more interesting and artistic than others, all contain a touch here and there of his lyrical genius and a sign of close communion with Nature and with popular traditions. It is this which, in spite of occasional blemishes, coarseness, incongruities and roughness of execution, gives to his *autos* an eternal magic. Owing to his genius Portugal, with a literature essentially undramatic and lyrical, may claim a very important place in the history of the drama.

## NOTES

(1) The documents concerning Vicente are printed in Senhor Braamcamp Freire's *Gil Vicente* (Porto, 1919), pp. 433-450.

(2) *Auto da Festa*, ed. Conde de Sabugosa (Lisbon, 1906), pp. 33, 65-70.

(3) *History of Portuguese Literature*, English tr., vol. II, p. 90.

(4) *Antología de Poetas Líricos Castellanos*, t. VII, p. ccxxv.

(5) For the full text of the letter see C. Michaëlis de Vasconcellos, *Notas Vientinas*, I (1912), pp. 21-22.

(6) See his *Historia da Inquisição em Portugal*.

(7) *Ibid.*, ed. 1907, vol. III, p. 24.

(8) Copies of his *Gil Vicente* (Porto, 1919) are difficult to obtain, but the question will be more fully treated in the second (Rio de Janeiro) edition.

(9) *Fastigimia* (Porto, 1911), p. 48.

(10) *Ibid.*, p. 178. See Vicente, *Obras* (1834), vol. II, p. 223: *Caerá flor en las flores*.

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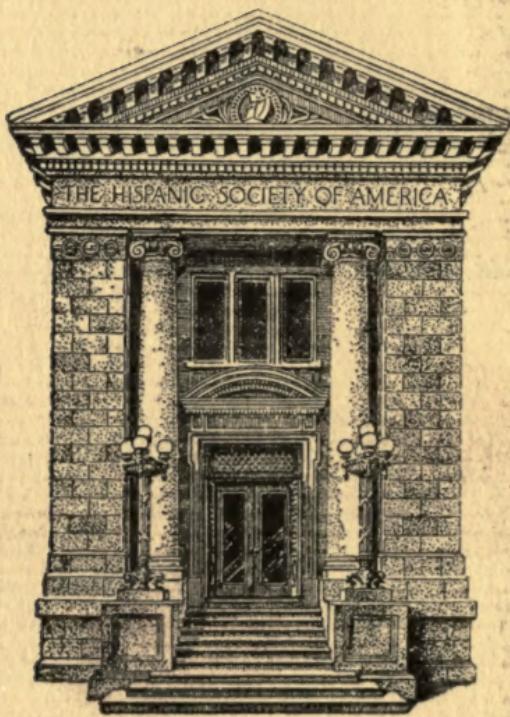


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